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NOTES AND NEWS

Reports from London give some interesting details of some experiments, which could be duplicated, partially, at least, in many schools, showing the conditions under which children can do their best work. A school-room was fitted with apparatus by which the temperature could be regulated and kept at any point between fifty and eighty degrees. Other apparatus was used to increase the humidity, and to secure movement and change of air, whenever desired.

The results of the experiments given briefly are as follows: When the atmospheric conditions are favorable, mental alertness, and accuracy are improved by two or three hours of work. Temperatures in excess of sixty-five degrees indicate hurtful conditions, giving rise to symptoms of inattention, slackness, and headaches. But if the air is kept constantly moving temperatures in excess of sixty-five will not prove harmful; and even at higher temperatures movement and change of air ameliorate the harmful conditions somewhat. But at seventy and above marked symptoms of deterioration in alertness and accuracy are very evident, whatever the atmospheric conditions.

Commissioner Draper has recently supplemented his late report on Industrial Education with an address on "Agricultural Education in the Public School System;" he sums up the conclusions as regards the work of the rural elementary school as follows, which he calls "suggestions concerning the educational basis of agricultural interests":

There should be a complete and interrelated system of schools, elementary, secondary, and higher, open to all, and essentially under the control of the people of the state.

The elementary school should be within reach of every farmer's home. So long as the school is adequately sustained and competently taught, the location may be left to the people of the district. It is more a question of expediency than of educational principle, and there is no balance of advantages in school-concentration to justify forcefully overthrowing an established order.

The elementary schools are to teach the elements of an all-around English education. They cannot specialize much and they are not to be in any sense exclusive. They are to aim at fitting children for the choice of any vocation they may prefer and for beginning the preparation therefor. They are always to preach the gospel of work, and to use books and objects and methods to stimulate quite as much interest—in the country, perhaps, more interest—in agriculture as in any other industry. This should be guarded in making the elementary syllabus. The work of the elementary schools in the country as in the city should not dawdle and waste time through the multiplicity of books and the idle exploitation of pedagogical theories and methods. It

should be definite quantitatively as well as efficient qualitatively. The attendance laws should be enforced in the country as in the city, even though the extent of child labor on the farm and the distance from the school make neglect of the law very frequent and the difficulties of enforcement very great. The course should be simplified and shortened and the child brought to the end of it, with the assurance that he has some definite knowledge and measure of efficiency by the time he is fourteen years old. Better professional supervision should establish some satisfactory basis of graduation from the country elementary school, and graduation should qualify the pupil for admission to the high school, or a district agricultural school.

Massachusetts has a playgrounds act which should prove suggestive to other states. Every city or town in the state which has a population of 10,000 or more, and which shall vote to accept the provision of the act, shall be privileged, after July 1, 1910, to provide and maintain one public playground, conveniently located and of suitable size and equipment, for the recreation and physical education of the minors of the community; and at least one additional other playground for every additional 20,000 of population. The communities may appoint their own qualified supervisors and determine their compensation. Land may be secured for these purposes by public condemnation, as for other public purposes, and the community is empowered to raise the money therefor by taxation; and the community may, in order to meet the situation, incur indebtedness beyond the limit of municipal indebtedness to an amount not to exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1 per cent. of the assessed valuation. It will not be necessary to establish a sinking fund for the payment of this increased indebtedness, unless the community so desires. A majority of the voters in any city or town can make the act effective. Twenty-three communities have already voted to take advantage of the provisions of the act.

Advance sheets of the *Report of the Commissioner of Education* give some very interesting data as to educational progress during 1908. The schools of the country enrolled, last year, about nineteen millions of pupils of all grades and classes. That is to say, about 20 per cent. of the total population of the country attended the common schools for a longer or shorter period. The total expenditure by the public schools for the year was about three hundred and thirty millions of dollars.

A remarkable feature of the past year is found in the public interest in education as shown in the great number of educational commissions which have been and are at work investigating various phases of the educational situation. Ten states appointed such commissions. The work which they have undertaken is too varied to be specified in detail here but it is a subject well worth attention on the part of those interested in our larger public pedagogy. Technical and vocational education is one of the more prominent factors to be investigated. Massachusetts, Maryland, and

New Jersey each appointed a commission to provide better plans for this work.

A most encouraging phase of the work of the year is seen in the large number of voluntary educational organizations that have been established. These are both local and national in extent and import. This method of bringing issues to the larger social consciousness is being used more and more. It used to be thought that there must be something wrong with the interest that had to rely upon voluntary support in a country where the people rule, and where they ought to be able to get everything they want. But it is seen, now, that this is the best way of determining what it is the people actually do want.

But educational forces and issues are taking on an international aspect, also. During 1908 at least nine great international congresses, devoted to the problems of public and social education, were held. Congresses on the welfare of the child, on industrial education, moral education, household economy, popular education, etc., were very prominent. It is becoming more and more apparent that the problem of education is a world-wide problem, and not a merely local issue.

Recent numbers of the *Psychological Clinic* have contained considerable material of service to teachers. In the January number Dr. Roland P. Falkner, ex-commissioner of education for Porto Rico, presents "Some Uses of Statistics in the Supervision of Schools." He is chiefly interested in the economic results that follow from the proper employment of statistical data by the superintendent. He shows that in 1904-5 Porto Rico had fewer schools than in the previous year, but over 3,000 more children were in these schools. This result was obtained by the efforts of the district superintendents, spurred on by the admonitions and the reports of the commissioner's department. As another illustration Dr. Falkner finds in a school-report for an American city that the average registration per teacher was 42.08, the average roll per teacher 32.01, and the average attendance 30.3. These figures show that the school-system is not utilizing these teachers to the full extent, and yet a considerable number of children were in half-day sessions.

Whether half-day sessions are a detriment to the progress of the pupils or not, requires statistical examination. In three rooms in Camden, N. J., half-day pupils in 1905-6 made better percentage of promotions than the all-day pupils of the preceding year under the same teachers. In one case a contrary result was observed. Under these circumstances—and these are the only records of the kind available—Dr. Falkner contends that we cannot be sure that half-day classes for beginners in the first grade are a positive evil.

Another article takes up the question of "Elimination of Pupils from School," classifying some of the cities of the United States according to

the percentages of loss throughout the grades. The city of Worcester, Mass., is in the class which loses less than 40 per cent. before the eighth grade. New York, Chicago, and Minneapolis lose between 65 and 70 per cent.; Cincinnati and St. Louis lose between 75 and 80 per cent.; whereas Philadelphia and Baltimore lose over 80 per cent.

The conclusions of the White House Conference on Children should be of interest to every teacher. Professor Henderson said once: "There is only one thing nobler than being a school-teacher, and that is to be a teacher." Interest in such work as that done by President Roosevelt's White House Conference indicates the teacher as distinct from the mere school-teacher. The full report of the conference appears in a current number of *Charities and The Commons* as "A Programme of Child-Caring Work." It should be in the hands of every teacher, and every school-teacher, too. This report deals with home care, preventive work, home-finding, state inspection of child-saving agencies, physical care of children, undesirable legislation, and the formation of a federal children's bureau. A thoroughgoing programme is outlined. When summarized it amounts to this: "The particular conditions and needs of each destitute child should be carefully studied and he should receive that care which his individual needs require, and which should be as nearly as possible like the life of the other children of the community." Has the teacher any responsibility in connection with this programme?

School Hygiene, the journal of the American School Hygiene Association, has been presenting some most valuable materials on the subject which it represents. But the journal has reached the point where it must have increased support if it is to continue its work. Its aim is "to secure improved school conditions for children, to awaken public interest in their welfare so that needed improvements can be obtained, and to report progress in this movement." The movement is worthy of more liberal support.

The editor of the *Psychological Clinic* has been attempting to criticize the so-called "Emanuel Movement" out of existence. He contends that "Dr. Worcester and his collaborators have reported no results as yet which establish satisfactory proofs of the efficiency of their methods." But his criticisms of what he calls the "Yellow Psychology" of Professor Münsterberg and the revived "occultism" of Professors James and Royce, are especially interesting. He contends that Professor James has been, throughout his course, "distinguished by an unscientific attitude, and that he has produced no results which have had any effect upon the development of modern psychology." All of which, of course, reads like the questions which Rip Van Winkle asked after his twenty years of sleep.